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People queue outside a bank, in Nicosia, in Cyprus, before it opened for the first time in two weeks

CYPRUS BAILOUT AGREEMENT

Early in the morning on 28th March people began to queue outside many banks in Cyprus. This was the first time in two weeks that the banks had been allowed to open. Earlier in the month the country's government had ordered all the banks to close. It insisted that the bank closure was necessary while it held talks with European Union (EU) officials about Cyprus' financial difficulties.

Cyprus is a large island in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. The ancestors of most of the people who live on the island originally came either from Turkey or Greece.

In 1974 Turkey sent an invasion force to Cyprus. It landed on the island's northern coast. Turkey claimed that it wanted to protect Turkish people living in Cyprus. It suspected that a militant Greek group was planning to seize control of the island. Turkey was worried that if

this group were successful it would invite Greece to take over Cyprus.

The United Nations (UN) managed to persuade the two sides to agree to a ceasefire. Cyprus has remained divided ever since. Thousands of Greek Cypriots who lived in the north had to move to the south. The Turkish Cypriots in the south moved north. Many businesses had to close and the island's economy was badly affected.

The southern part of the island became known as the Republic of Cyprus, or just Cyprus. The northern part is now called the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In 2004 Cyprus joined the EU. Four years later it decided to change its currency from the Cypriot pound to the euro. Cyprus is therefore a 'eurozone' country, or one of the 17 EU members that use the euro.

After joining the eurozone Cyprus quickly developed a large banking

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industry. The taxes people had to pay to the government were very low. The country's biggest banks, such as Laiki Bank and the Bank of Cyprus, offered high interest rates. Wealthy people and companies in other countries, especially Russia, began to keep large amounts of their money in Cyprus' banks.

Banking became the most important part of Cyprus' economy. To make extra money the banks in Cyprus decided to lend large amounts of the money they held to the Greek government and companies in Greece.

During the last three years several eurozone countries have had severe financial problems. Either their governments had borrowed too much money or their banks had got into difficulties. These countries include Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and Spain.

Together the EU, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are often called 'the troika'. The troika agreed to lend extra money to these four countries. Arranging these very large 'rescue' or 'emergency' loans is known as a bailout.

So far the eurozone country that has had to have the biggest bailout is Greece. As part of its most recent bailout the troika insisted that those who had lent money to Greece would not get all of it back. When lenders lose money in this way it is often described 'as having a haircut'. Therefore, because of the troika's ruling, the banks in Cyprus had to take a 'big haircut' on the money they had previously lent to Greece.

As they had 'lost' so much money lending money to Greece the banks in Cyprus began to have serious problems of their own. The government did not have enough money to rescue them. So, at the beginning of March, Cyprus became the latest

eurozone country to ask for a bailout. Nicos Anastasiades, the president of Cyprus, met with the troika's leaders. They agreed to help.

However, the troika demanded that a bailout to rescue the banks would only be given if some of the money that was needed came from the people of Cyprus. The banks, the troika said, would therefore have to take a certain percentage of the money in everyone's bank accounts. To stop people from rushing to withdraw all their money before this happened the banks were ordered not to open.



This has not happened with other bailouts. EU leaders explained that the difference with Cyprus was the large amounts of money from other countries, such as Russia, which had been paid into its banks.

Several EU leaders suggested that much of the Russian money paid into Cyprus' banks had been made unlawfully, or from criminal activity. Russia is not a member of the EU. The EU leaders therefore insisted that money needed for the bank rescue also had to be taken from the bank accounts of people who do not live in Cyprus.

At first the parliament in Cyprus refused to agree to the troika's demands. However, Mr Anastasiades said that without the bailout money the banks would collapse. If this happened, he explained, many people would lose all their money and most businesses would have to close.

Eventually an agreement was reached. Cyprus would have to find €5.8 billion (£4.9 billion) to qualify for a €10 billion (£8.5 billion) bailout from the troika. Most of the money that Cyprus has to raise will now be taken from what people and companies have in their bank accounts.

Those with less than €100,000 (£85,000) in the bank will not be affected. Yet those with more than this amount may lose as much as 60% of their money. Laiki Bank will be shut. Its customers are to be transferred to the Bank of Cyprus, which will be restructured.

Just before the banks reopened capital controls were introduced. This means that only €300 (£254) per person can be taken out each day. This is to stop everyone from withdrawing all of their money at the same time. Also, people are not allowed to take more than €1,000 (£847) with them when leaving the country.

People in Cyprus are now very angry. Some blame the troika. But others say that it's the government's fault. The country's leaders, they argue, should have stopped Cyprus from being too dependent on its banks.

Thousands of people and companies will lose a lot of money. Hundreds of businesses will have to shut and the number of people without jobs will greatly increase. What's more Cyprus' biggest industry, banking, has almost been closed down.

Most people say the situation in Cyprus is now similar to what happened 39 years ago when Turkey invaded the island. Nearly everyone agrees that it will be a very long time before Cyprus' economy recovers.

Some experts now warn that if another eurozone country needs a bailout the troika may make similar demands to the ones that Cyprus was forced to accept. ■

PLUTONIUM DISCOVERED

For several years a group of archaeologists from Italy have been working at the ancient city of Hierapolis, in south west Turkey. Recently the leader of the group announced that they had discovered what in ancient times was known as the Plutonium. This was Pluto's Gate, or the 'Gate to Hell'.

Hierapolis was an important city in both Ancient Greek and Roman times. It was built next to some hot springs. At that time bathing in the hot waters was believed to improve a person's health and to cure certain illnesses.

During the Greek and Roman era several earthquakes badly damaged the city. Eventually it was abandoned. A German archaeologist began digging at the site in the late 1800s. In the 1950s and 1960s a number of walls and pillars that had been knocked down by earthquakes were rebuilt.



Graphic of how the Plutonium may have looked
(Francesco D'Andria)

Today it is possible to visit Hierapolis' ruined buildings, temples and its Roman theatre. Close by is a large necropolis, or area where many of the people who lived in the city were buried. A large museum has been built on the site of the Roman baths. Each year thousands of tourists travel to Hierapolis. Some local people still come to bath in one of the ruined city's hot water pools.

NewsCAST

PRESIDENT'S BREAKDOWN — Barack Obama, the president of the USA, recently travelled to Israel. This was the first time that he had visited the country since becoming the American president. When he travels to other countries hundreds of government officials accompany the president. A large black presidential car, nicknamed 'The Beast', is also taken on these visits. The car has been specially made. It is bulletproof and designed to withstand large explosions. Because of its armour plating the car is very heavy. Yet, while Mr Obama was being driven through the streets of an Israeli city, his car suddenly broke down. Unusually, the president then had to change cars. Later it was discovered that The Beast had been filled with petrol and not diesel.

In Greek mythology Pluto was the god of the underworld. To the Greeks and Romans the Plutonium was the passageway that led to Pluto's underworld.

There are several written records describing the Plutonium. Yet none say exactly where it was. For example, the Greek geographer, Strabo, who lived around 2,000 years ago, wrote about it. He described how any animal that passes through the Plutonium immediately died. Strabo also said that he threw some small birds towards its entrance and they also died.

When following the route of one of the hot springs the archaeologists discovered a small cave opening. Either side were pillars. On these were inscriptions to both Pluto and Kore, or Persephone. In Greek mythology Persephone was the queen of the underworld.

Carbon dioxide fumes, which form naturally underground, still come out of the cave. Large amounts of carbon dioxide in a small space can be poisonous. Above the cave's entrance the archaeologists found the remains of steps and nearby was what used to be a pool. These all match the ancient descriptions of the Plutonium.

The archaeologists think that people were allowed to sit on the steps above the cave's entrance to watch the priests. Some people were then given small birds to test the deadly fumes. These were thrown towards the cave's entrance, as described by Strabo. Only the priests could go near the Plutonium. They would sacrifice animals by leading them to its entrance. The toxic fumes coming out of the cave would then immediately poison the animals.

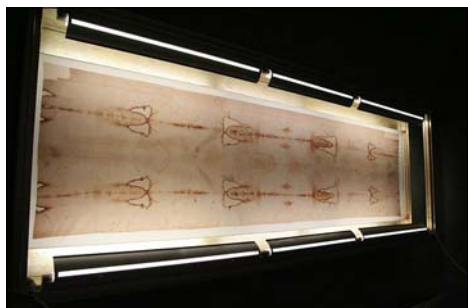
Then people had no knowledge about gases such as carbon dioxide. It is therefore easy to understand why they believed that the deadly cave was the gate leading to Pluto's underworld. ▣

TURIN SHROUD TELEVISION BROADCAST

On 30th March, for only the second time ever, and the first time in 40 years, the Turin Shroud was shown on a live television broadcast. The shroud, which is rarely put on display, is kept in a special case made of bulletproof glass. Pope Francis, the new leader of the Roman Catholic Church, arranged the broadcast.

The shroud is named after the city of Turin, in northern Italy. It has been kept at the city's cathedral for over 400 years. A shroud is a piece of material in which a dead body is wrapped.

The Turin Shroud is 4.4 metres (14.3 feet) long and 1.1 metres (3.7 feet) wide. The shroud shows a faint image of a bearded man. In some places there are stains and burn marks. The stains are in the area of the man's hands and feet and around the top of his head. For many years the shroud belonged to one of Italy's former royal families. In 1983 they decided to give it to the head of the Roman Catholic Church.



The Turin Shroud in a specially made display case at Turin Cathedral, in Italy

In 1898 a photographer was asked to take the first photographs of the unfolded shroud. When he processed his film he was amazed to see a very clear image of a man. The shape of the man was much clearer as a 'negative' picture than a 'positive' one. As this was the first time the shroud had been photographed the negative image had never been seen before.

Some people think some of the marks on the shroud are bloodstains. What's more these stains are in the places where a man's wounds would be had he been crucified. For this reason some believe that the shroud is the cloth in which the body of Jesus Christ was wrapped after his death. If true the shroud would be around 2,000 years old.

However, many historians say it is unlikely that a piece of cloth could survive for this length of time. Also, there are no historical records of the shroud existing before 1360.

In 1988 the Roman Catholic Church agreed that a small piece of cloth could be cut off and used to date the shroud. Scientists carried out special tests on this piece of cloth, called carbon dating. These tests showed the shroud dated to the 13th or 14th century.

However, some people do not believe the result of the tests. They claim that the bits that were dated were from parts of the shroud that had been repaired after it was damaged by fire in the 1500s.

One problem is that, so far, nobody has been able to explain how the negative-like image on the cloth was made.

More scientific tests have recently been done on the parts of the shroud that were used to carbon date it in 1988. These seem to show that it might be at least 1,800 years old.



Head of the figure on the Turin Shroud shown as an original and negative image

The marks on the shroud are unusual. Some scientists who have studied it insist that the image could not have been painted or 'rubbed' into the cloth. They suggest that only 'some form of electromagnetic energy, such as a flash of light at short wavelength' from ultraviolet lasers could have made the marks.

Christians believe that after his death Jesus Christ was **resurrected**. Some people now think that the image was created 'in a flash' at the time of his resurrection. Yet scientists who have studied the shroud have not said

this. The Roman Catholic Church has never claimed that the Shroud is an image of Jesus Christ.

The television broadcast was of a special religious service, which was led by the Archbishop of Turin. During the service, which took place in Turin Cathedral, the archbishop was seen kneeling in front of the shroud. The broadcast took place on what some Christians call Holy Saturday. This is the day between Good Friday, when Christians mark Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. ■

DRUG RULING IN INDIA

The Supreme Court, or the most senior court in India, made an important decision on 1st April. The court ruled that a company called Novartis would not be able to stop Indian companies from making copies of one of the medicines it produces.

Novartis is a large pharmaceutical, or drug making, company. It is based in Switzerland. One of the drugs Novartis makes is called Glivec (in some countries the name is spelt Gleevec). This drug is a very effective treatment for a type of leukaemia. This disease is sometimes described as cancer of the blood.

Most large drug companies such as Novartis (others include Eli Lilly, Roche, Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and GlaxoSmithKline) take many years to research and develop new drugs. Also, before a new drug can be given to people it has to be tested. These tests can last for several years. This means that the new drugs these companies develop are often very expensive to buy. The companies argue that if they did not charge a lot of money for their drugs then they

would not be able to pay for the research to develop new ones.

Normally these large drug companies would apply for a patent on their new drugs. A patent is a way of protecting something that a person or company has designed or invented. This means that others cannot copy it.

In many countries pharmaceutical companies can patent their drugs for a period of 20 years. After this time has ended other companies can legally make copies of their drugs. These medicines are often described as generic, or copy-cat, drugs.

Many of the companies who make generic drugs are in India. In the 1970s India decided not to recognise drug patents. Several Indian companies then started to produce generic copies of drugs made by large pharmaceutical companies. These are sold at much cheaper prices and under a different name.



There can be a big difference in price. For example, in some countries the price of treatment with the Glivec drug, for one year, is around US\$70,000 (£46,300). The Indian generic version cost US\$2,500 (£1,650) per year. Yet the larger pharmaceutical companies do have arrangements in some less wealthy countries where their drugs are free or much cheaper.

In 2005 India passed a new patent law. This said that local companies could not copy patented drugs made by others after this date. Yet this did

not apply to Novartis' Glivec drug, as it was patented before 2005.

However, Novartis and other large drug companies have been improving some of the drugs they first developed many years ago. They have then applied for a new patent on the improved version. Some people call this process 'evergreening'.

Novartis claimed that companies in India should recognise the patent on its new version of Glivec. Yet the Supreme Court in India disagreed. It said that the new version was almost the same as the old and it was therefore not a new medicine. The court's decision means that Indian companies can now make copies of the new version. Other large pharmaceutical companies are now concerned. This is because, in future, the Indian court is likely to make similar decisions about their drugs.

Most large drug companies are unhappy about the Indian court's decision. Yet many medical organisations are pleased. They argue that the large pharmaceutical companies are wrong to charge so much money for their drugs. Hospitals in places such as Africa, they say, cannot pay these high prices. These hospitals therefore rely on the less expensive Indian generic drugs. ■

FLOODS IN MAURITIUS

A very powerful rainstorm struck the island nation of Mauritius on 31st March. The heavy rain caused serious flash flooding in many parts of the island including Port Louis, the capital city.

Mauritius is in the Indian Ocean. It was both a former French and British colony. It eventually became an independent country in 1968. The country has a president, who is

head of state, but is run by an elected prime minister and his government.

When floodwaters appear very suddenly it is often called flash flooding. This can happen when the ground is no longer able to absorb any water. Heavy rain then flows over the surface of the land and down slopes. As they quickly fill up 'walls' of water rush down river valleys. This volume of water is so great that it can then spread out over a wide area.



Floodwaters in Port Louis

With normal flooding people can see the water levels in rivers gradually rising. They therefore have time to leave their homes and move to safer places. Yet with flash flooding there is often little warning of the danger and the floodwaters rise very quickly.

In a period of less than two hours 152 millimetres (six inches) of rain fell on and around Port Louis. This is about 70 millimetres (2.8 inches) less than the average for the whole of March. People and cars were swept down the streets as roads suddenly turned into fast flowing rivers. Many parts of the city were waist deep in water. It's thought that eleven people drowned in the floods. Most were in an underground walkway that suddenly filled with water.

In one part of the city hundreds of houses were either destroyed by the floodwaters or badly damaged. Many people are now homeless. After the waters subsided many of the streets were covered in thick mud

and fallen trees. Hundreds of people helped to clear the mud away. Others handed out food and water to those who were worst affected.

The following day the country's prime minister, Navin Rangoolam, spoke on national radio. He declared that 1st April would be a national day of **mourning** to remember those who had died. This year there has been more rain than usual in Mauritius. The prime minister blamed climate change for the floods.

However, some people were critical of the government. They said that, the day before, weather forecasters had predicted very heavy rain. They therefore claimed that there may have been time to prevent some of the flooding and warn people to stay away from the city. ■

FAIRY CIRCLES EXPLAINED?

Some grassland areas of parts of Namibia, Angola and South Africa are covered in circular **barren** patches of land. These are sometimes called fairy circles. For the last 40 years researchers have been trying to work out what causes the circular shapes. Now a scientist from Germany claims that he has finally solved the mystery.



Single fairy circle

At first the circles were thought to be permanent. Yet studies over long periods of time have shown that this is not true. The circular shapes seem to gradually grow bigger. The largest

ones have a diameter of around 12 metres (40 feet). It's thought that some of the bigger ones can last for as long as 75 years before they 'die'. When this happens the surrounding grasses begin to grow inside them. Eventually the barren patches are covered over and they disappear.

Local people say that spirits, which they believe are their ancestors from long ago, make the round patches. So they think the circles are 'footprints made by the gods'.



Fairy circles in Namibia

In the past, scientists have suggested that they are caused by a number of different things. One theory is that another type of plant leaves a form of poison, or toxin, in the soil, so nothing else will grow. Another idea is that the barren rings have something to do with radioactivity or poisonous gases coming up from deep underneath the ground. However, so far, none of these have been shown to be true.

Professor Norbert Juergens has been studying the fairy circles in Namibia for six years. He is now sure that small insects, called sand termites, create them. Many small organisms live both in and around the circular areas. Yet the professor found only one, the sand termite, in all the circular areas he studied, even the smaller, or younger, rings.

Professor Juergens believes that the rings of sandy soil act like a water trap. Where the grass grows the plants' roots suck up any

rainwater. Then, by a process known as transpiration, the plants gradually release this water into the air as water vapour.

Sand termites do not build large nests or mounds like other types of termites. Instead they live below the ground where they eat the roots of the grasses. This stops the plants from growing.

Where there are no plants the rainwater soaks into the sandy soil and does not evaporate so quickly. It then spreads evenly in the soil. This, the professor says, is why the shapes are circular. The barren patches act like a type of 'reservoir'. So what the termites do helps to provide water for the surrounding grassland. The termites then eat the roots of the grasses that are growing around the edge of the circle. This explains why the rings gradually get bigger.

If Professor Juergens' theory about fairy circles is correct it means the termites and grasses depend on each other. The termites are therefore 'acting like farmers' – they help the surrounding grasses to grow so they can then feed on the plants' roots. ■

ARAB LEAGUE MEETING

The Arab League held an annual meeting, or summit, on 26th and 27th March. It took place in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The Arab League was set up in 1945. It is made up of countries that use Arabic as their official language. It now has 22 members, including Palestine (Palestinian Authority). Arab League members insist that Palestine is an independent state.

The Arab League's headquarters is in Cairo, the capital of Egypt. A secretary-general is elected by the

Member countries of the Arab League

Algeria	Jordan	Oman	Sudan
Bahrain	Kuwait	Palestinian	Syria
Comoros	Lebanon	Authority	Tunisia
Djibouti	Libya	Qatar	United Arab
Egypt	Mauritania	Saudi Arabia	Emirates
Iraq	Morocco	Somalia	Yemen

members to lead the organisation. The current secretary-general is Nabil Elaraby, who is from Egypt.

Towards the end of 2011 the Arab League voted to suspend Syria, which is one of its members. This was because of what was happening in the country.

Fighting in Syria has now been going on for two years. It started after the government ordered the army to use weapons to stop street protests. The demonstrators were complaining about the country's president, Bashar al-Assad, his government and the police force. The president and his family have controlled Syria for over 40 years.



Moaz al-Khatib

So far it's thought that the violence has been the cause of at least 70,000 deaths. Around one million Syrians have crossed the borders into Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon to get away from the fighting. However, many people in certain parts of Syria still support Mr al-Assad.

Last November several organisations opposed to Mr al-Assad's government met in Doha. They agreed to form a group called the Syrian

National Coalition (SNC). They did this so there would be one main opposition group instead of many different smaller ones. Moaz al-Khatib was selected to be the SNC's leader.

In recent months Mr al-Khatib has said that opposition fighters, or rebels, need better military equipment. This he explains includes anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Mr al-Khatib says that without these types of weapons it will not be possible to defeat the Syrian army and air force or get Mr al-Assad to leave the country.

Countries such as the USA and EU member nations have declared that they support the SNC. Yet so far they have refused to give the rebels the weapons that they want. Instead these countries have supplied what's known as non-**lethal** equipment, such as military radios and vehicles.

Many, but not all, of the Arab League members have said that they support the SNC. During the summit Mr al-Khatib was invited to sit in the chair that is reserved for Syria. This chair has been 'empty' since Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011.

Syrian government officials were angry. They complained that the Arab League had given their seat to a group of criminals and terrorists.

During the summit it was also agreed that Arab League members could supply the rebels with weapons if they wished to. ■

APRIL FOOLS' DAY

In many countries the first day of April is known as April Fools' Day. On this day some people play practical jokes and tricks on their friends. Nowadays in some countries television and radio stations, companies and newspapers make unusual announcements on 1st April. They do this to try to fool people into believing something, which isn't true.

Nobody really knows where the celebration of April Fools' Day comes from or why 1st April is its date. Some believe it may have something to do with an Iranian festival. Called Sizdah Be-dar, it is held on the 13th day of the New Year in the Persian calendar. The festival takes place on 1st or 2nd April.

As it is a festival of joy and laughter, one of the many Sizdah Be-dar traditions is to play jokes on people. It's known as one of the oldest joke-playing traditions in the world. This is why some people think this festival is the reason for April Fools' Day.

However, others believe it comes from France. In France, a 1st April tradition is the *poisson d'Avril* or the 'April fish.' As a joke, people try to stick a paper fish on another person's back without them noticing. If they are successful the person walks around with the paper fish on their back while others laugh at them.

In 1564 France officially changed the calendar that was used in the country. The new calendar, called the Gregorian calendar, is the one that nearly all countries use today. Before changing the calendar, New Year was celebrated at the end of March. In the Gregorian calendar the start of the New Year is at the beginning of January. So, after 1564, anyone celebrating the New Year on

the last day of March was thought to be a fool, or a *poisson d'Avril*.

This year, on 1st April, a UK passenger airline company announced that it had developed the world's first plane where the underside, or bottom, was made of glass. Another airline company from Canada said that raccoons, goats and bears would now be allowed on its aircraft. A Japanese company, which makes electronics, declared that it had developed a set of headphones for cats.

APRIL 2013						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Google, the internet search company, added a new link to its website. Called 'Google Nose', people were invited to click on it and download different odours. They would then be able to smell these through their computer. Different types of smells could be downloaded. They included lemon, perfume and even horse manure. After the download was clicked on an April Fool's message appeared.

A television company in the UK made one of the most famous April Fools' [hoaxes](#) in 1957. It broadcast a serious report about how spaghetti was grown and harvested from trees in Switzerland. Then only a few people in the UK had eaten spaghetti and many believed that the report was true.

In some countries, tradition says April Fools' jokes can only be played until noon on 1st April.

Otherwise, the person who organised the joke will bring bad luck upon him or herself. ■

MERCURY METEORITE?

Researchers in the USA think that an unusual green coloured meteorite might be from the planet Mercury. If true then it would be the first meteorite ever found that has come from this planet. Mercury is the smallest planet in the Solar System and the one closest to the Sun.

Many meteorites have been found either in deserts or in Antarctica. This is because they are easier to spot in these places.

The green coloured meteorite is very small. It is the biggest of 35 fragments, or small pieces. The fragments, which have a total weight of 345 grams (12.2 ounces), were picked up in the desert, in Morocco, last year. A German meteorite hunter bought the bag of tiny pieces after he saw them on sale in one of Morocco's markets. He then sent the fragments to the American researchers.

The green coloured meteorite's official name is NWA 7325. NWA stands for North West Africa, as this is where it was found. The number shows that it is the 7,325th meteorite that has been officially recorded.

Most meteorites originally came from the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. This is a region of space where there are many bits of rock, or rubble. These were 'leftover' when the planets in our Solar System were formed billions of years ago. This ring, or belt, of bits of rock stretches all the way around the Sun. Most pieces of rock in the asteroid belt range from a few kilometres wide to ones that are the same size as a piece of dust.

Of all the meteorites found on the Earth around 110 are thought to be from Mars. Scientists believe something large, such as a huge asteroid, crashed into Mars millions of years ago. The force of the impact threw rocks high up beyond the planet's gravitational field. These rocks have been travelling in space for millions of years. Over time some fell into the Earth's atmosphere and landed on the ground.

A similar impact may have happened on Mercury a long time ago. It's also possible that a powerful volcanic explosion on the planet [ejected](#) rocks beyond Mercury's gravitational field. NWA 7325 is thought to be about 4.5 billion years old.

In 2011 a NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) unmanned spacecraft, or probe, called Messenger, finally went into orbit around Mercury. The space probe took six years to reach the

NewsCast

BUNNY WARNING — Police officers in California, in the USA, heard an unusual message on their radios - 'I'm stopping the Easter Bunny.' The message came from a colleague. He was travelling along a motorway and had seen a driver dressed in a full Easter Rabbit costume. The 'rabbit' was riding a motorbike with a sidecar. The police officer stopped the rider. He explained that, because of the rabbit's head, the man was unable see all the other cars around him. This meant he was putting himself and the other people using the motorway in danger. However, after giving a warning, the police officer allowed the 'Easter Bunny' to continue on his journey. The man said he was on his way to a charity event.

planet. Since it arrived Messenger has been mapping Mercury's surface and recording information about the planet's rocks.



NWA 7325 (meteorites.de)

NWA 7325 is unusual. This is because it has the lowest magnetic strength of any meteorite yet found. It also contains little iron. This means it is very similar to some of the rocks on Mercury that the Messenger spacecraft has recently recorded. ■

TAGGING BLUE WHALES

A team led by researchers from Australia has managed to find, or track down, a group of blue whales near Antarctica. To do this they used specially designed **acoustic** equipment. This was able to track the whales' 'songs', or the noises they make.

Blue whales are mammals. They are the largest animals ever to have existed. This means they are even bigger than the largest known dinosaurs. They can grow to over 30 metres (98 feet) long and weight as much as 180 tonnes.

Hundreds of years ago blue whales could be found in all the world's oceans. It's believed that there were many thousands of them. In the late 1800s and early 1900s steam ships designed to hunt whales were built. These ships were called 'whalers'. During this time tens of thousands of blue whales were

caught and killed. The blubber, or fat, from their bodies was used to make candles, soap, and oil for lamps. Some of the whales' bones were also turned into useful items, such as piano keys.

In 1966, because so few were left, a decision was made to ban all blue whale hunting. Today, no one is sure how many blue whales there are. Yet experts think it may be around 12,000. The ones that live in the Southern Ocean, near Antarctica, are rarely seen.

Blue whales do not have teeth. Instead they have comb-like filters along their upper jaws. These are called baleen plates. Even though blue whales are the world's largest animals they feed on tiny shrimp-like sea creatures called krill. The whales take in huge mouthfuls of water and then push it out through their baleen plates. This filters out all the krill in the water, which are then swallowed. An adult blue whale can eat as many as 40 million krill in one day.



Blue whale

Blue whales produce sounds. These are often called songs. Some of the sounds are of very low frequency. The songs can last from ten to 30 seconds. It is not known why the whales do this. Some people think they are communicating with each other, or it is a way of recognising the groups that they belong to. Their songs can travel underwater for very long distances.

The researchers placed several specially designed buoys, or floating devices, near the Ross Sea, in Antarctica. These were placed far apart from each other. The buoys were able to detect, or pick up, their songs even though the whales were far away. As different buoys picked up the same songs it was possible, by a process known as triangulation, to work out where the whales were. The researchers' ship then sailed to that part of the ocean.

This was the first time that a group of blue whales had been located by listening to their songs. Once the researchers found the whales they used small boats to get close to them. They managed to fix tags on two of the whales. They also took biopsy samples, or small samples of their bodies, which will be studied later. The tags mean it will now be possible to track the whales and find out where they go to at different times of the year. ■

BRICS MEETING

The BRICS group of countries held its fifth annual summit, or meeting, on 26th and 27th March. The summit took place in Durban, the third largest city in South Africa. Jacob Zuma, the president of South Africa, hosted the meeting.

BRICS stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. At first the group was known as BRIC. Yet, two years ago, South Africa was invited to join, so the name was changed.

A person working for an American bank first used the name BRIC to describe these countries. He grouped these nations together as they were the four developing countries with the world's fastest-growing economies.

Roughly 40% of all the people in the world live in BRICS countries. Two of the members, India and China, have the biggest populations in the world. Both are home to over one billion people.

The BRICS countries also represent about 25% of the world's total economy. China now has the second-biggest economy in the world. The largest is the USA. Many people believe China's economy will overtake the USA's within the next 15 years.

The BRICS countries' economies are different from one another. For example, the economies of Brazil, India and China are based on manufacturing, or making things in factories. (India also has many software and information technology service companies.) Russia makes most of its money from natural resources such as coal, oil and gas, gold, iron ore, and copper. South Africa's economy is also based on natural resources. It is one of the world's largest producers of diamonds and gold.



Manmohan Singh, prime minister of India,
Xi Jinping, president of China,
Jacob Zuma, president of South Africa,
Dilma Rousseff, president of Brazil,
Vladimir Putin, president of Russia

Some people were surprised that South Africa was invited to join the group. This is because there are many other developing countries that have larger and faster growing economies. These include Indonesia,

Mexico, South Korea, and Turkey. However, South Africa's economy is the largest in Africa. Its inclusion therefore means that there is now one BRICS member in each of the world's main regions: the Americas, Europe, South Asia, Asia Pacific, and Africa.

Most of the discussions at the meeting were about the set up of a new development bank. This would be similar to the World Bank, which is based in Washington DC, the capital of the USA. These types of banks agree to lend money to developing countries to help them to improve their economies.

The leader of each member country was at the summit. Apart from India all the BRICS countries have a president. India's leader, Dr Manmohan Singh, is his country's prime minister. The Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, has only just been officially appointed as China's new president. So this was his first BRICS summit. As part of his trip to South Africa Mr Xi also visited Tanzania and Congo. ■

RECORD-BREAKING ISS JOURNEY

On 28th March a Russian Soyuz space capsule arrived, or docked, at the International Space Station (ISS). It was launched six hours before, on top of a powerful rocket, from the Russian space centre in Kazakhstan. This was the quickest ever space flight to the ISS.

The ISS is an international project. The USA and Russia and a number of other countries built it. The first part of the space station was launched into space in 1998. Many other rocket launches were needed to complete it. The ISS has been manned since 2000.

The space station orbits, or travels around, the Earth at a height of roughly 400 kilometres (248 miles). Each day it completes 15.7 orbits of the planet.

Nowadays astronauts spend around six months living in the space station before being replaced by others. So far astronauts from at least 15 countries have stayed on the ISS. Yet most astronauts who travel to the space station are either Americans or Russians.



Launch of the Soyuz space capsule

Most of the astronauts who spend time on the ISS carry out experiments or **maintain** and repair parts of the space station. But a few have been 'space tourists'. These people have paid large amounts of money to be allowed to visit the ISS for a few days and experience what it's like to be in space. The money from these trips helps to pay for things needed for the space station.

In the past most of the astronauts, and the supplies they needed, travelled to the ISS on American space shuttle flights. However, because of their age and the cost of maintenance, NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) decided to 'retire' the space shuttles. So they are no longer in use. Therefore, since the end of the space shuttle flights in 2011, all astronauts have been taken to and from the ISS by Russian spacecraft.

Last year an American unmanned spacecraft called Dragon arrived

at the ISS. It was carrying supplies of food, water and equipment. An American company, called SpaceX, designed Dragon and the rocket that launched it. This was the first time that a spacecraft built by a private company had docked with the ISS. Some people have described Dragon's first spaceflight as 'the start of the commercialisation of space'.



International Space Station

In future NASA plans to pay private companies, such as SpaceX, to operate space 'taxis' and 'supply trucks' to the ISS. These companies will expect to make money from their space flights. As NASA no longer has to organise these flights it will be able to spend more time working on advanced space missions, such as travelling to Mars and beyond.

The Russian Soyuz space capsule was carrying two Russian astronauts and one American, as well as some supplies. In the past space flights to the ISS have taken around two days. This was because spacecraft orbited the Earth about 30 times before finally arriving at the space station.

However, this time the Soyuz capsule only travelled around the Earth four times before it docked with the ISS. This was possible because of new technology and the Russian space agency using a different launching method, or technique.

One NASA official described the new technique as 'a chase into space'. Firstly the Soyuz capsule was not launched until the ISS had

just passed overhead. Then, once it reached the same height as the ISS, the capsule had to travel faster, for a distance of 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles), to catch up with it. It was able to do this because it had been fitted with newly designed steering equipment and more powerful thrusters, or rocket engines. ■

NORTH KOREA DECLARES 'STATE OF WAR'

On 30th March North Korea announced that it was in a 'state of war' with South Korea. A few days later it said that it would reopen one of its nuclear reactors, which was closed six years ago. It has also threatened to destroy American military bases in South Korea and other parts of Asia.

Members of one family have ruled North Korea for 65 years. Kim Jong-un took over after his father died at the end of 2011. Little is known about North Korea's leader, but he is thought to be about 30 years old.

North and South Korea became separate countries soon after the end of the Second World War (1939 – 1945). In 1950 the North invaded the South. This led to the Korean War, which lasted for three years. The United Nations (UN), with mainly American troops, helped the South. China supported the North. The war ended in a truce. Yet no peace treaty has ever been signed between North and South Korea.

The border between the countries is where the two opposing armies were facing each other when the fighting stopped in 1953. The border, called the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ), is a narrow strip of land covered in mines and barbed wire.

Today thousands of soldiers still face each other across the DMZ.

North Korea is a very secretive country. Many believe North Koreans have been 'brainwashed', or persuaded to believe that their leaders are god-like and never do anything wrong. People living there may not leave the country without special permission and few visitors are allowed. Even though many people in the country do not have enough to eat North Korea spends most of its money on weapons and its huge army.

Around ten years ago it was discovered that North Korea had started to develop nuclear weapons. It carried out its first underground nuclear test in 2006. Later North Korea made an agreement to end its nuclear programme in return for large amounts of aid, such as supplies of oil and food.

In recent years North Korea has continued to develop nuclear weapons. Last February it carried out its latest underground nuclear test. The country has also been developing and testing long range rockets.



North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un

After its last nuclear test the UN imposed more sanctions on North Korea. Sanctions are a type of punishment that makes it difficult for North Korea to trade with other countries. More recently the USA has been carrying out military exercises with the South Korean army, navy and air force. These exercises

take place every year. Yet this year the USA has included training flights of large bombing aircraft.

Many people think that both the sanctions and the latest military exercises have annoyed North Korea. This, they believe, is why it has been threatening to attack the South and American military bases. Some suspect that the threats are part of a North Korean plan to get more aid. Yet others fear that a war could soon break out between North and South Korea.



On 2nd April, Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general, or leader, of the UN, said that the situation had become very dangerous. He said that urgent talks should be held with North Korea to reduce the risk of war. ■

GLOBAL ARMS TRADE TREATY

On 2nd April the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, in New York City, held a vote to approve a new global arms treaty. It passed, as 153 member countries voted 'yes' and only three voted 'no'. Twenty-three countries decided to abstain, or not to vote at all.

The UN already has a treaty about banning the sales of what are

known as weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These include both nuclear and chemical weapons.

Also, in 1999, the UN voted to ban the use of landmines. These types of weapons are hidden under the ground. They then explode when someone steps on them. Landmines are designed to badly wound soldiers. Today, in some places where there have been previous wars, landmines still cause serious injuries. The mines may have been buried a long time ago. Yet, when the fighting stopped, they were forgotten about. In some places the people who put the mines in the ground could not remember where they were.

Around 160 countries have ratified the UN ban on landmines. This means the ban has become one of their own country's laws. However, some countries such as the USA, Russia, China, India and Pakistan have chosen not to sign the landmine ban.

The new Global Arms Treaty is meant to restrict the selling of what are often called conventional weapons. These include tanks, large guns, warplanes, attack helicopters, warships, missiles, automatic weapons, and handguns.

Governments that agree to the new arms treaty have to make sure that any conventional weapons made in their countries are not sold to certain nations or organisations. For example, these types of weapons must not be traded if they could be used by terrorist groups or criminal gangs. Furthermore they cannot be sold to places where using them might harm women and children or abuse people's human rights.

Countries cannot be forced to stop selling the weapons they make. However, those that sign the new treaty will have to give a report to the UN each year. The reports will

list what weapons have been traded as well as to whom and where they have been sold. The reports will be made public, so anyone will be able to read them if they wish to.



United Nations General Assembly, New York City

The USA and Russia sell the greatest number of conventional weapons to other countries. The other three biggest arms-exporting nations are China, Germany and Ukraine.

The three countries that voted against the new arms treaty were Syria, Iran and North Korea. These countries said that the treaty contained errors and was unfair.

Several of the big weapons-exporting countries chose to abstain. These countries included Russia and China. Nations that buy, or import, many conventional weapons such as India, Pakistan and Indonesia also decided not to vote. ■

WORLD'S LARGEST EGG FOR SALE

Christie's, a famous international auction house, based in London, the capital of the UK, has announced that an unusual egg will be put up for sale in April. The egg, which is partly fossilised, was laid by an elephant bird hundreds of years ago.

Elephant birds are now extinct. They used to live on the island of Madagascar. These huge birds, which could not fly, were like very large African ostriches. Fully-grown elephant birds were around 3.4 metres

(11 feet) tall and weighed about 400 kilograms (880 pounds). Their eggs were at least 100 times larger than those laid by chickens. They were even bigger than dinosaur eggs.

Many pieces of elephant bird eggs have been found, yet a complete one is unusual. Archaeologists are thought to have discovered the one being sold by Christie's in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

Even though these birds were very big they were **herbivores**. So they ate only plants and fruits. Madagascar has been an island, cut off from other landmasses, for about 88 million years. Many of the island's animals and plants have therefore evolved, over this very long period of time, in a particular way.

Elephant birds are believed to have been living on Madagascar around 60 million years ago. It is not known exactly when they became extinct. Some scientists think this happened about 1,000 years ago. Yet several sailors, who first travelled to Madagascar from Europe in the early 1500s, claimed to have seen very large bird-like creatures on the island. If these were elephant birds then the last ones probably died out around 500 years ago. It's thought that four separate species of elephant bird lived on Madagascar.

Elephant birds are examples of what is known as 'island gigantism'. This is when certain kinds of animals living on islands evolve to become much bigger than similar animals on the mainland. This can happen if these animals have no predators on the island. A lack of predators means that the animals no longer have to hide or escape from them.

Other examples of island gigantism are Galapagos tortoises, Komodo dragons and the Flores giant rat. Flores is an island in Indonesia.

However, once humans arrive on an island, where these types of creatures exist, it is not unusual for the large animals to disappear. This is because they can be easily hunted to extinction. For example, the moa and the dodo were also large flightless birds. The moa lived in New Zealand and the dodo was found on the island of Mauritius. Both are believed to have been extinct for at least 400 years.



Elephant bird, ostrich, man and chicken

Humans are not thought to have reached Madagascar until around 2,500 years ago. Yet not all scientists think elephant birds were hunted to extinction. Some believe the more likely cause for them dying out was that humans 'stole' the birds' giant eggs for food. The forests where they lived were also gradually cut down.

The elephant bird egg being sold by Christie's has a diameter of about 22 centimetres (nine inches) and is 30 centimetres (12 inches) in height. The auction house expects someone to pay as much as £30,000 (US\$45,400) for the giant egg. ■

EARTH HOUR

On 23rd March, between 8.30 and 9.30 in the evening, people, organisations and companies in over 150 countries switched off all their electric lights and **appliances**. All were taking part in an annual event called Earth Hour.

The first Earth Hour was held in 2007. It was organised by the Australian part of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and a newspaper company. It first began in Sydney, the largest city in Australia. Then around 2,000 companies, and more than two million individuals or families, in the city, turned off all their electric lights for one hour.

In many countries fossil fuels - oil, gas and coal - are burnt to make, or generate, electricity. Burning these fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide. Nowadays, most scientists agree that this extra carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is acting like a greenhouse. They claim it is causing average world temperatures to rise and, in some parts of the world, climate change.



The organisers of Earth Hour say the annual event is meant to make people more aware of the possible problems that burning fossil fuels might cause. They therefore hope that by taking part people support the idea of using more sustainable ways of generating electricity. These include solar, wind and wave power, which produce much less carbon dioxide or none at all.

Each year Earth Hour is held just after the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere and the autumn equinox in the southern hemisphere. This occurs around the 20th or 21st March. After the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere the days start to get longer and the nights

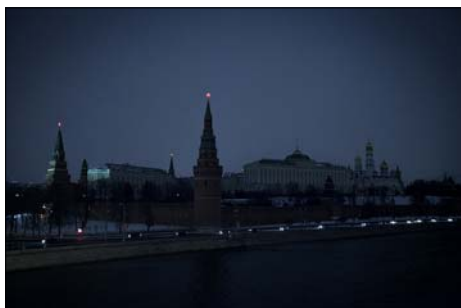
shorter. In the southern hemisphere the opposite happens.

At first the WWF decided it wanted to make Earth Hour an annual national event in Australia. However, the following year, several cities in other countries said they too wanted to take part. Within a few years Earth Hour had spread around the world. This year the organisers estimate that at least 7,000 cities in 150 different countries took part. Some places that did so for the first time included Tunisia and Rwanda in Africa, the island of St Helena, in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Ecuador, in South America.

Nowadays the lights are switched off for an hour in and around many famous city landmarks. These include Times Square, in New York City, in the USA, the Houses of Parliament, in London, the capital

of the UK, and the Eiffel Tower, in Paris, France's capital city.

This year, for the first time, the lights went out in Red Square and the Kremlin. Red Square is in the centre of Moscow, the capital of Russia. The Kremlin, which is on one side of the square, is a huge **fortified** building, which was originally used by the Russian royal family. Today it is the official home and offices of the Russian president.



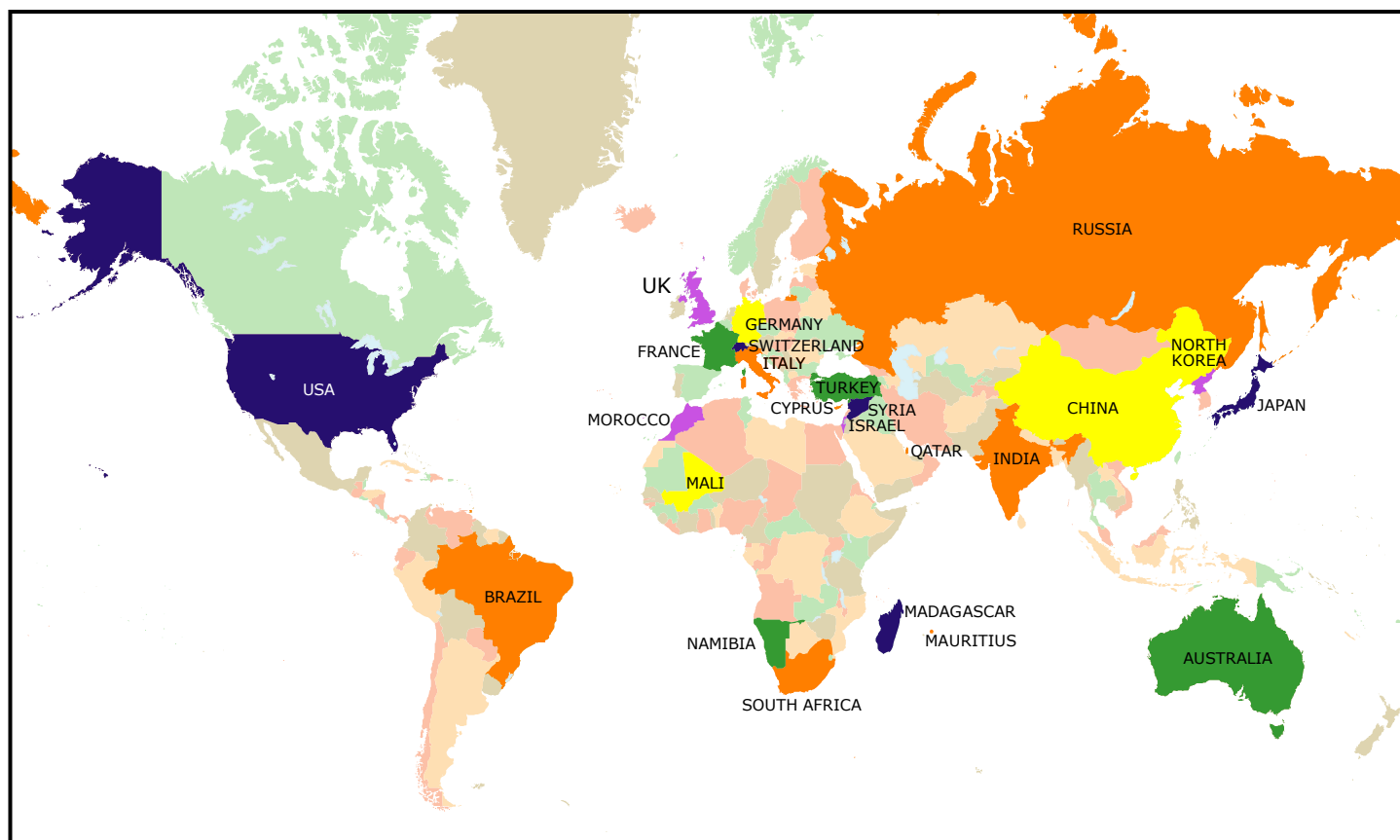
The Kremlin, in Moscow, during Earth Hour

Not everyone agrees with Earth Hour. For example, a few argue that

millions of people using candles during Earth Hour create even more carbon dioxide. The organisers admit that Earth Hour does not save much electricity and makes little difference to the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They say that nowadays the purpose of the event is to unite people around the world by making everyone realise that more needs to be done to protect the planet. ■

MOST POPULAR MUSEUMS

Each year a publication, called the Art Newspaper, carries out an annual survey to find out which are the most visited museums in the world. This year's list has recently been announced. For the sixth year running the Louvre, in Paris, the capital of France, came top.



The Louvre is where one of the most famous paintings in the world - the Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci - is displayed. The building used to be a royal palace. It was from here that the kings of France, together with their advisors, ran the country. Yet in 1682 the then King of France, Louis the Fourteenth, decided to move to the Palace of Versailles. Then Versailles was a small village about 20 kilometres (12.5 miles) from Paris. However, today it is a suburb of the city.



The Louvre, in Paris

In 1989 a new entrance hall, or lobby, was built at the Louvre. It is below ground underneath a large glass pyramid. At the time there were many arguments about the design. Some people said it was wrong to put such a modern looking structure so close to a very old royal palace. Yet today the glass pyramid outside the Louvre has become one of Paris' best-known landmarks.

The museum survey showed that last year around 9.7 million people visited the Louvre. This was about one million more than the previous year. The probable reason for the big increase in the number of visitors is the recent opening of a new part, or wing, of the museum. In this wing there is now a new display of Islamic art.

Second on the list was the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City, in the USA. Around six million people visited this museum.

Third, fourth and fifth places went to museums in London, the capital of the UK. In fourth place was London's Tate Modern. This museum, which opened only 13 years ago, is in an old power station. It displays modern and contemporary art.

As part of the Art Newspaper's annual survey it also records visitors to art exhibitions. These are temporary displays of pictures by certain artists. The paintings in these exhibitions are normally kept in other museums.

The most popular exhibition was held at the Metropolitan Art Museum, in Tokyo, the capital of Japan. This exhibition, which lasted for four months, was called 'Masterpieces from the Mauritshuis'. The Mauritshuis is an art museum in The Hague, in the Netherlands. This museum has recently been closed for refurbishment.



*Girl with a Pearl Earring
by Johannes Vermeer*

The exhibition was of paintings by Dutch artists. It included one of the world's best-known pictures. Called the 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' it was painted by the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer (1632 – 1675). This picture is often described as the 'Dutch Mona Lisa' or 'the Mona Lisa of the North'. Around 10,500

people a day went to see the exhibition in Tokyo.

Now that the exhibition has ended in Japan it will move to the USA. After that it will travel to Italy. The paintings will return to the Netherlands in 2014 when the Mauritshuis museum reopens. ■

COLD SPRING EXPLAINED?

At this time of the year in the northern hemisphere it is springtime. Usually, the days become warmer as the colder winter weather disappears. Yet this year seems to be different. The cold winter weather is lasting much longer than normal. Some scientists now say it's possible that the reason may have something to do with the melting of Arctic sea ice.

For many people living in the northern hemisphere spring begins around the 20th or 21st March. This is the spring equinox. It marks the date at which the days begin to get longer and the nights shorter. Yet temperatures in many northern hemisphere countries have been much lower than normal. What's more, during the past few winters, there has been more snow than usual in parts of Asia, North America and Europe.

Weather experts say that the reason for this year's colder spring is the position of what's known as the 'jet stream' or 'polar jet'. The jet stream is like a 'current' of air or 'river' of high-speed winds. It goes around the world about ten kilometres (six miles) above the ground and blows from west to east.

The jet stream's wind speed is normally faster in winter than summer. It does not stay in the same place, nor does it blow in a straight line. Instead the jet stream meanders around the globe. It can also move

south towards the equator or north closer to the Arctic.

The jet stream has been much farther south than it usually is at this time of year. For example, during springtime the jet stream would normally be blowing across northern Europe. Yet throughout March it was above North Africa and the Mediterranean Sea.

The jet stream can act as a type of 'barrier' between warmer tropical air coming from the south and the colder air from the Arctic. So, if the jet stream moves south the places to the north of it will become colder and wetter. Alternatively, if the jet stream moves north the weather will be warmer and drier to the south of it.



Cloud formation in jet stream

Some of the sea ice in the Arctic melts during the summer months. It then refreezes in winter. Yet the amount that refreezes is not always the same as the amount that melts. Recently less sea ice has refrozen. Most scientists believe that this is because of global warming.

Some scientists now think that this smaller amount of Arctic sea ice could explain why the jet stream has been so far south. They say that when there isn't such a large covering of ice, cold Arctic winds move southwards. These colder winds are therefore stopping the jet stream from moving north.

Also, if there is less sea ice, there is a larger area of open sea in the Arctic. This, the scientists explain, means

that more moisture gets into the atmosphere. This moisture then freezes and falls somewhere else as snow.

Therefore melting Arctic sea ice could be the reason why spring has been so much colder in the northern hemisphere this year. It might also explain why some places have had record-breaking snowfalls. ■

CHOCOLATE BUNNY RULING

On 28th March a court in Germany ruled that a company could continue to make its chocolate bunnies. The court's decision finally ended a legal disagreement between two chocolate making companies, which first began 12 years ago.

Lindt & Sprüngli is a famous Swiss chocolate company. It is also known simply as Lindt. The company first began as a sweet shop in Zurich, the largest city in Switzerland, in the 1840s. One of the company's most famous products is a chocolate rabbit, or bunny. The rabbits are hollow and wrapped in gold foil paper. They have a red ribbon around their necks with a bell attached to it.

Lindt has been making these chocolate rabbits for many years. Of all the chocolates it produces, Lindt says, the bunnies are one of the most important. Millions of the company's chocolate rabbits are sold all around the world every year.

In 2000 Lindt applied to European Union (EU) officials for a trademark for its chocolate bunny. Having a trademark means other companies may not copy the name of the trademarked item or make something that looks exactly the same.

Lindt then began to contact other companies that made similar chocolate rabbits. It told them they were

NewsCAST

CANCELLED POOH STICKS — An unusual competition has just been cancelled. It is based on a story in *The House at Pooh Corner*, one of the world's most famous children's books. In the story Christopher Robin and Winnie-the-Pooh, his toy bear, invent a game called 'Pooh Sticks'. They drop small sticks into a river from a bridge. The winner is the one whose stick is first to float out from under the other side of the bridge. The World Pooh Sticks Championships have been held in the UK every year since 1984. Competitors from all over the world take part. Heavy rains meant the river was flowing too high and fast for the safety boats. The organisers now plan to hold this year's event in the summer.

no longer allowed to do so. One of these was the Hauswirth Company from Austria. This company's chocolate rabbits were sitting in the same position as the Lindt one. They were also wrapped in a similar type of paper, but their red and white ribbons were much larger.

The Hauswirth Company claimed that having a trademark on a 3D (three-dimensional) rabbit shape was unfair. The company insisted that chocolate rabbits were difficult to make. This, it said, meant it was not possible to make them in a different shape from the Lindt bunny.

In 2011 a court in Austria judged that the Hauswirth bunny could easily be confused with the one made by Lindt. It therefore told the Austrian company that it could no longer make and sell its chocolate rabbits.

Lindt's legal argument in Germany was with a family run company called Confiserie Riegelein. It also

makes a chocolate rabbit that is wrapped in gold foil.

The boss of the German firm argued that his company had been making chocolate bunnies for 50 years. Lindt complained that the German company's rabbit could be mistaken for its own. However, the German court disagreed. It finally ruled that Confiserie Riegelein could continue to make its chocolate bunnies.



(Left) Confiserie Riegelein chocolate rabbit
(Right) Lindt chocolate rabbit

The head of Confiserie Riegelein declared that he was very happy with the outcome. The bosses of Lindt said that they were disappointed, but would respect the German court's decision. ▣

EU MISSION IN MALI BEGINS

On 2nd April soldiers from a number of different European countries began a new project, or mission, in Mali. The soldiers are part of an organisation called the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM). The EUTM's job is to train soldiers for Mali's new army.

Mali is a former French colony. It became an independent country in 1960. Last year armed groups of local tribesmen seized control of the northern part of Mali. The tribesmen call this area Azawad. Several Islamic militant groups helped them to defeat the Malian soldiers who then withdrew to the south.

The Islamic militant groups then took control of the main cities in northern Mali, such as Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. They insisted that everyone who lived in these places follow very strict Islamic laws. They then threatened to take over the remainder of the country.

In January the militant groups began attacking towns near Bamako, Mali's capital city. The country's leader, President Traoré, asked France for help. François Hollande, the president of France, quickly decided to send several thousand specially trained French troops to Mali. He said that if he had not done this, the militant groups would have seized control of the whole country.

Having rescued the capital city the French troops, together with Malian soldiers, moved to the north of the country. Other nearby African countries such as Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Benin, Ghana, and Guinea agreed to help. Each sent some of their soldiers to Mali. The leaders of these countries agreed to do this because they fear that these Islamic militant groups might cause similar problems in their countries.

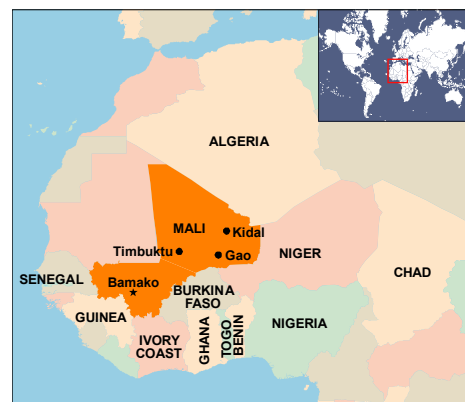
Within a few weeks the French troops, with help from the 2,000 soldiers that came from Chad, recaptured the three cities in northern Mali. The Islamic groups withdrew into the desert areas near the Algerian border.

Currently there are about 5,000 French troops in Mali. Mr Hollande says he wants to reduce this number to 1,000 by the end of the year. The plan is for soldiers from the other African countries to take their place.

Eventually Mali's own army will have to make sure that the militant groups do not return. Yet French military leaders say that the country's

army is poorly trained and badly led. What's more the equipment that it uses is also very old.

France is one of the founder members of the EU. This organisation has 27 members. So far at least 23 have agreed to send military trainers to Mali. Most of the EUTM trainers are from France but others come from Germany, Spain, the UK, the Czech Republic, Belgium, and Poland.



A senior French army officer has been appointed to lead the EUTM. He says that about 3,000 Malian soldiers will be trained by the EUTM over the next 12 months. It is expected that, after ten weeks of training, the first group of 670 soldiers will be sent to northern Mali around the beginning of July. ▣

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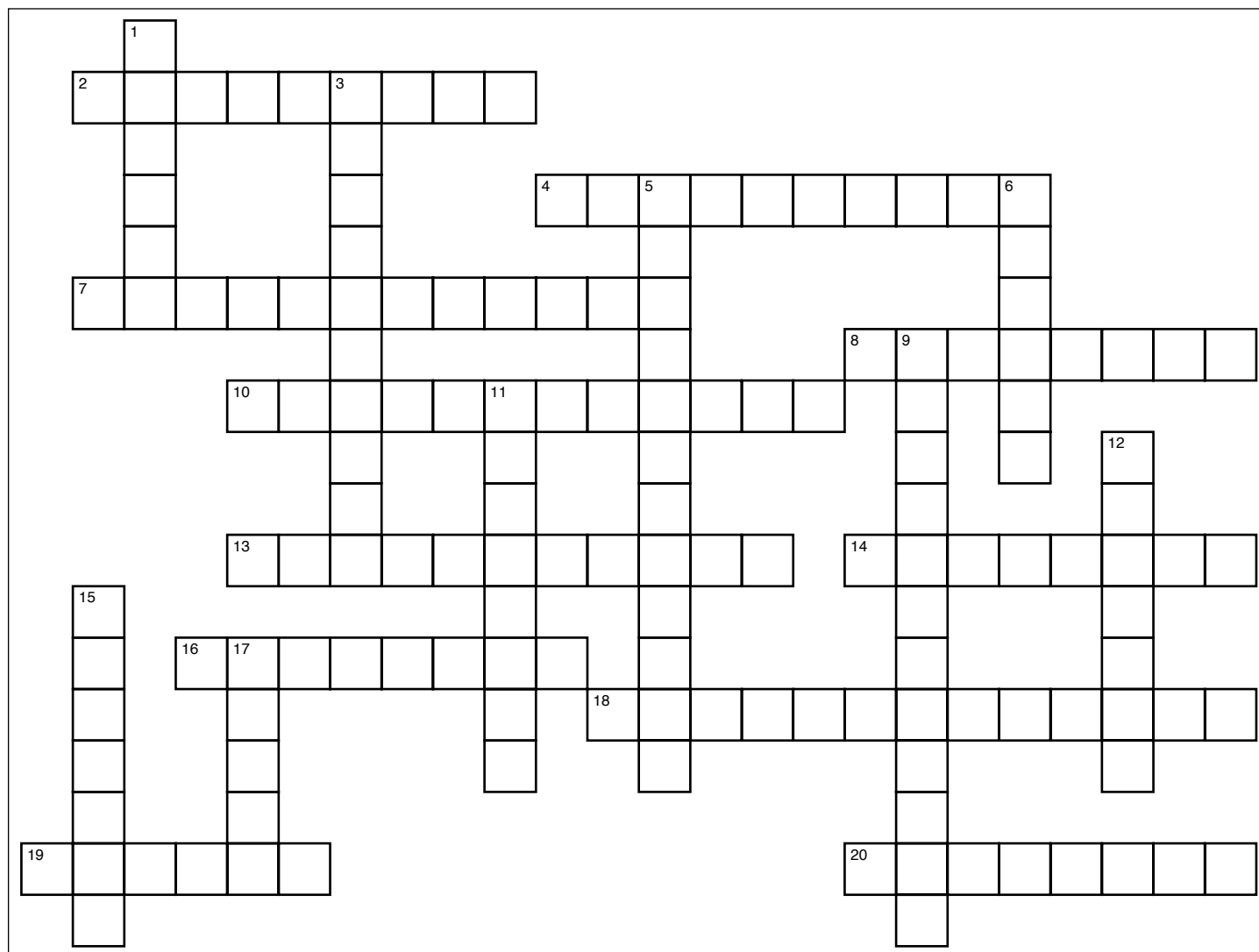
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ISSUE 194

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



Across

- 2 Noun (Plural)** Buildings or places that are well-known, especially ones you can use to work out where you are
4 Noun (Plural) Animals that feed on grass and other plants
7 Noun (Plural) Words or designs carved on a surface or written on a book
8 Adjective Describes something that is designed to absorb, respond to or control sound
10 Adjective Belonging to the present time
13 Verb Brought back to life
14 Verb Follows a winding course
16 Verb To keep in a good or proper condition
18 Noun The act of something being restored or repaired so it looks like new or in good condition
19 Noun (Plural) Tricks played to deceive people
20 Verb Gave formal approval or consent for something

Down

- 1 Adjective** Unable to support life
3 Noun (Plural) Pieces of household electrical equipment
5 Verb Rearranged the amount of money, which a company or person has borrowed, so less is repaid in total, or it is paid back at a later date
6 Noun District with buildings outside a city centre
9 Adjective (of weapons) not nuclear or chemical
11 Noun Sadness felt because someone has died, or the official acts done or time set aside to express this sadness
12 Verb Forced someone or something to leave a particular place
15 Noun A public sale where items are sold to the highest bidder
17 Verb To mistreat or treat someone in a cruel or inhumane way

ISSUE 194

GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

T I Z Y G S R E D N A E M K N D S L
 Z N N O I T C U A S Y B J D S J R A
 Z C E Q Y X S T D E M Q S N E L T N
 W J R M Y C Z B U K H A O Y C A T O
 S C R R H J J L M A I I I E J S N I
 K U A X A S Z P D L T Q H N E H W T
 P M B S K W I L N P A D X R T O H N
 T O F U A N R B I T E N O P E A L E
 C U G W R T A R R R O V D C W X I V
 I R H Y Z B C P U U I Y K M W E F N
 T N U A W S R T P B F I T S A S W O
 S I K Z N S C X R L C E H F H R E C
 U N A I G U O E U E I G R W N J K Q
 O G Q Y R C H E M N D A K K E K U S
 C O N T E M P O R A R Y N C K P R S
 A E S U B A H E H U E M T C A F E Z
 W E D I Z N J E A Y Y E G C E B J P
 R E S U R R E C T E D N Q A J S X Y

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

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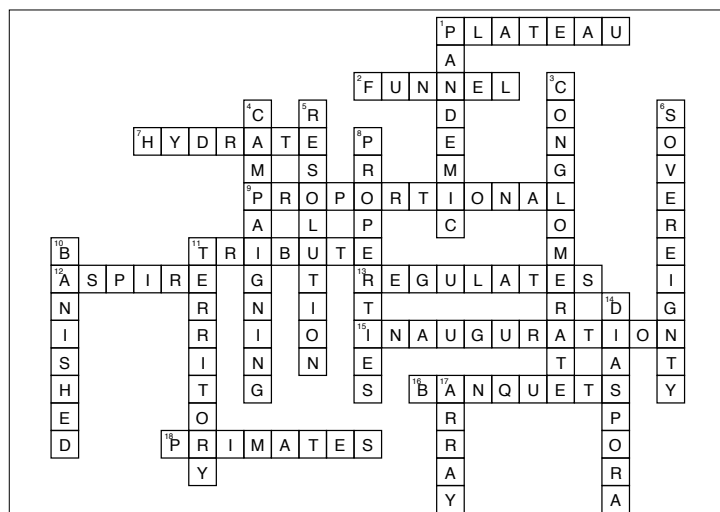


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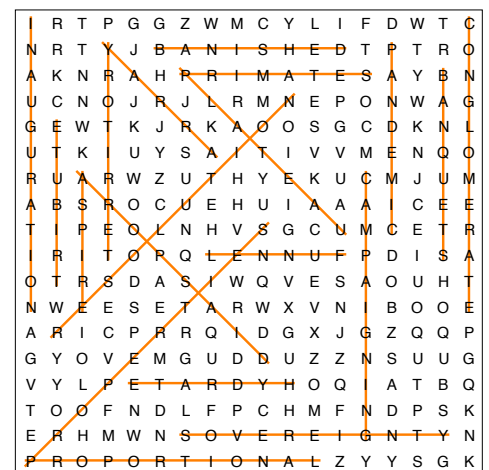
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MISSING WORD ANSWER =



ISSUE 193 ANSWERS



R E G U L A T E S